

I am increasingly concerned about the consolidation of media ownership. The latest example of abuse of consolidation is Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force all of their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary with no counter balance. Their assertion that they invited Kerry to speak after the broadcast is ridiculous since two weeks before the election candidates are booked and have no option to respond to this kind of attack. Sinclair says this documentary is news and protected by free speech. I'm all for free speech, why isn't Sinclair also airing Michael Moore's documentary on Bush in prime time? Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation. It is dangerous when media owners agenda is presented as "news". Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.